

March 2, 2012

Navy-Northrop Grumman/ Bethpage, NY:

Issue: Senator Charles Schumer has expressed concern regarding public water supply protection issues associated with past releases from the former Navy and Grumman manufacturing facilities, located in Bethpage, Nassau County, New York. EPA Regional Administrator Judith Enck has identified three goals: (1) The need to explore potential water supply protection options that would be acceptable to the affected water districts; (2) the need for more communication between NYSDEC and the affected Water Districts; and (3) the need for more prompt reimbursement to the affected Water Districts for costs incurred in treating contaminated groundwater to potable standards.

Most Recent Actions:

On Friday, March 2, 2012, DRA George Pavlou and staff participated in a conference call with the Navy and NYSDEC, to discuss technical and communication issues regarding the alternatives for water supply protection. (In addition to George, EPA participants were Carol Stein, Phil Flax, Mike Poetzsch, and Rob Alvey [ERRD]). George stressed the need for an independent review of the Navy's *Study of Alternatives for Management of Impacted Groundwater At Bethpage* (January 2012) discussed below, to help give the report more credibility in the eyes of the public. We reached an agreement, whereby the Navy will begin work on retaining the US Geological Survey to do an independent review of the report. Additionally, EPA (ERRD) also is planning to retain a contractor to review the report. EPA encouraged NYSDEC to go ahead with the public noticing of its PRAP for OU-3, the eastern plume. We also encouraged NYSDEC to reach out and communicate more frequently with the Massapequa Water District. The cost-reimbursement issue for the affected Water Districts was not discussed at this call, due to the unavailability of the Navy's legal staff to participate at this call.

Staff from RPB and ERRD participated in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) conference call on Monday, February 27. (Bruce Aber of ORC also was present.) Representatives of the US Navy, NYSDEC, NYSDOH, and the affected water districts also participated. At this call, the Navy presented its *Study of Alternatives for Management of Impacted Groundwater At Bethpage* (January 2012). At the call, the Massapequa Water District had the chance to ask several technical questions regarding the report. Disagreement with the recommended alternative was not brought up at this meeting.

Background:

In January 2012, the Navy submitted a report entitled *Study of Alternatives for Management of Impacted Groundwater At Bethpage*. The report had been prepared as per a recommendation of the Navy's Optimization Team that was tasked to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing off-site groundwater remedy. The report evaluated six possible alternatives, including the current remedy specified in the Record of Decision of 2001 (on-site source containment, off-site hot-spot treatment, off-site plume monitoring through use of "sentinel/outpost" wells, and wellhead treatment at impacted supply wells). The Navy's preferred alternative is 2A, which combines the



current ROD groundwater remedy with sustained pumping in strategic water supply wells (i.e., use of Bethpage Water Supply Wells). The alternatives were presented with the understanding that NYSDEC would have to complete an evaluation process before any modification of the current remedy could be selected. Additionally, there would have to be buy-in by the Bethpage Water District if its wells were leveraged for additional pumping under Alternative 2A. The report states that there is no guarantee that the need for wellhead treatment in downgradient supply wells would ever be eliminated under any of the alternatives, even if there were full plume containment (Alternatives 2B and 2C). The Navy said that, based on its experience, there are no sites for comparison purposes with as deep of a plume as at the Bethpage plume. And even at other sites with hydraulic containment, "plume breakthrough and bypass still became evident."

On a related note, the Massapequa Water District (MWD) currently is circulating a petition asking Governor Andrew Cuomo to take immediate action to ensure full containment of the groundwater plume before it reaches the water supplies. The petition plays down the effectiveness of well-head treatment at the affected water supplies. Although MWD did not specifically bring up this issue at the TAC conference call, they did submit a comment letter to the Navy and NYSDEC regarding the Alternatives Analysis Report, citing alleged success stories of plume containment at sites where the plume was not nearly as extensive as the Navy-Bethpage plume.